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THOUGHTS
ON THE
PRESENT COUNTY PETITIONS.

[Price ONE SHILLING.]

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ON THE

PRESENT COUNTY PETITIONS



Price One Shilling

THOUGHTS
ON THE
PRESENT COUNTY PETITIONS,
ORIGINALLY WRITTEN
For the INFORMATION
OF A
FRIEND IN THE COUNTRY,
AND NOW ADDRESSED TO THE
GENTLEMEN, CLERGY,
AND
FREEHOLDERS THROUGHOUT ENGLAND. *K*

*Si bene te novi, metues, Liberrime Lalli,
Scurrantis speciem præbere, professus amicum.*

HORAT. EP.

BY AN OLD FASHIONED INDEPENDENT WHIG.

Printed for LOCKYER DAVIS, in HOLBORN.

M DCC LXXX.

THOMAS

OF THE

BRITISH COUNTY PETITIONS

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN

IN THE

PARLIAMENTARY COUNTRY



AND THE

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

AND THE

IN THE

AND THE

M. DCC. LXXX.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

PRESENT COUNTY PETITIONS.

LETTER I.

YOUR refusing to sign the petition respecting the reduction of the Civil List expences, &c. at the meeting on Monday last, at ———, and immediately coming to Town for my opinion thereon, were very pleasing and perhaps fortunate circumstances: for as no one can foresee, when such serious matters are once set on foot, where they may end, it possibly may prevent a political Animosity between us hereafter.

The conversation, I then had with you, admitted of no more than a general outline of my Ideas; there was not time sufficient,

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nor

nor was I sufficiently prepared to enter into a full discussion of the subject; but as it has frequently occurred to me since, and finding myself at leisure, I now mean to give you my opinions in writing, more fully than I was able in that conversation.

Your being inclined to sign the petition I am very sure arose from an upright and well disposed motive; and I believe that the greatest part of those, who have signed it, were induced by the like good intention: But if my memory does not fail me, you acknowledged, that the Minority Members of Parliament, who have been the most forward in promoting these petitions and Associations, are actuated by selfish and ambitious Views. Yet, however, you observed, that while they were the instruments to set on foot a Redress of Grievances, the people at large had nothing to do with their private motives and your observation was very just supposing they really mean what they publicly profess, but as there appear to me very strong reasons to entertain doubts on that head, I think the country Gentlemen and other Freeholders in the Counties ought to keep those doubts in
view

view, and narrowly watch the proceedings of this class of men, and all those under their influence, if they themselves are in earnest and really wish these meetings to produce any essential benefit to the Community.

The names of those noble families which appear to dignify these petitions and associations ought not to dazzle the well meaning Freeholder: it is well known that those families have been candidates for power for many years past, and that they have been unsuccessful candidates; we may then naturally imagine what at present, is the disposition of their minds and also that of many others of an inferior rank, who come under the same description.

It is, therefore, incumbent on the Freeholders at large to examine into the nature and extent of these petitions and associations, and make themselves masters of the real purport and probable consequences of them; they should take under consideration what are the *proper objects* for petitions and associations.—When once the Body of Freeholders are clearly and fully possessed of these, and determined to pursue every legal and

constitutional means of obtaining those objects, I shall rejoice to see petitions and associations in every county in England; for then there will be great reason to hope for a Reformation and Redress of Grievances; but on the other hand, I am persuaded if they suffer themselves to be guided and directed by those forward people before described, their petitions will produce very little else than private animosity, tumult and confusion. But I will suppose petitioning may go something further, it may perhaps effect a change of Ministry—the grand if not the sole Object of these Minority Leaders—yet I will venture to affirm, it will never produce those solid and essential advantages to the Community, which many well meaning people who have signed the petitions seem to expect.—Hereafter I may probably give you some further thoughts on the subject.

LETTER II.

IN your answer to my last, you say that my letter abounds with assertions, but gives no proofs to support the opinions I have advanced. In this, I mean to enter more minutely into the subject.

What is the prayer of the petition from Yorkshire and the other Counties? It is, That before any new burthens be laid upon this country, effectual measures may be taken by the House of Commons to enquire into, and correct the gross abuses in the expenditure of public money; to reduce all exorbitant emoluments; to rescind and abolish all sine-cure places and unmerited pensions; and to appropriate the produce to the necessities of the State in such manner as to the wisdom of Parliament shall seem meet. Should it be granted, that the savings to the State would be no more, according to the most exaggerated estimate, than two hundred thousand pounds a year, is there a Freeholder in England
of

of common understanding who thinks this, merely as an aid for carrying on the present expensive war, an object of sufficient importance to throw the whole nation into tumult and confusion, at a time when we have so many foreign enemies almost at our doors? Surely not— But it may be still said, that it is something towards it; and the preamble to the petition estimates, that the Crown derives its great and unconstitutional influence, now so much complained of, from these places and pensions. In the course of this correspondence I mean to shew that the reducing and abolishing these places and pensions, (if too we institute the long talked of plan of triennial Parliaments) would very little diminish the present influence of the Crown, compared with other circumstances which I shall hereafter point out; some of which might with great propriety be objects of county petitions.

I should be glad to be informed, whether any of these forward promoters of Petitions, and Associations, have pointed out what the further reformatations, which they have in view, are. If their intentions, respecting reformation

mation of abuses, be upright and proper, there can be no just reason for concealing them, on the contrary it would animate the Body of Freeholders, in each county, to support and enforce the petition with more zeal and ardour.

It is my firm belief that the promoters of these Petitions and Associations have not pointed out any other objects of reformation; because they have no such objects in view.—Nay, I will venture to go farther, I am persuaded, that they do not seriously wish that even the prayer of the petition should be complied with.—They know very well, that though it is not so very important in its own nature and extent, as they would wish the people to believe, yet at the same time they know that no object of equal importance could attract the attention of the public so much; they are also persuaded, that the prayer will most probably be rejected, and these considerations have induced them to adopt this object and no other.

Although I believe it to be an acknowledged truth, among those who are conversant with this

this and the various Courts on the Continent, that the Government of Great Britain, considering the Magnitude of its power, and comparative value of money, is conducted with less expence than any other Government in Europe, yet the exorbitant and unnecessary waste of public treasure, in gratifying the prodigality or avarice of Placemen and Pensioners, and the wanton expenditures under the article of secret service, &c. for which Ministry do not account to the public, ever was and ever will be a subject of popular cry; and of course when any set of men of rank and influence stand forth as the champions in the cause of the people, to diminish this imagined exorbitant and unnecessary waste of treasure, drawn from the purses, more or less, of every individual in the Kingdom, they cannot fail of being heard.

When I say *imagined* and unnecessary waste, I beg you would not suppose that I think it is wholly so, it is partly imaginary and partly real: for the unnecessary waste is by no means so much as the people in general imagine. In general the profits of Civil Officers under the Crown are but barely
suffi-

sufficient to support them decently in their station in life; the profits of many not sufficient even for that; yet, however, I will admit that there are some officers under the Crown, who, particularly in time of war, receive most exorbitant profits. And, indeed, while the rest of the people are groaning under an additional weight of taxes, each year imposed on them, for carrying on a most threatening and expensive war, some, obliged to narrow their enjoyments in life, and many others reduced to distress, the sight of these Leviathans rolling in wealth, acquired by that very means, which has reduced a great part of the nation to penury and want, must create mortifying reflections. I will also grant that there are many sine-cure Places unnecessary, and Pensions unmerited, and shall therefore most heartily join the cry of the multitude, in praying that the profits of these officers, and these unnecessary places and unmerited pensions, may be retrenched, and abolished, and that the savings therefrom be appropriated to the service of the public.

I will not say, that the money expended under the article of Secret Service, is always applied with due attention to the real service of the nation ; I will suppose that it is not ; yet, as I apprehend there must be such an article of expence in all well-established governments, and as the very name implies, that the appropriation rests solely in the breasts of the Ministry for the time being, over which they have, and always must have, a discretionary, uncontrouled power, and for which they are accountable only to the King himself, abuses on this head I do not see how Parliament can interfere with propriety ; and, indeed, I have reason to believe, that the money which might be saved in this article, under the most upright administration, would be scarcely a national object,

The Leaders in the Minority, however, have fixed on this abuse, as the object of their Petitions : and although the circumstances may call loudly for reformation, and the attempt to reform them, if done in a legal, constitutional, and pacific manner, may be laudable ; yet, as was before observed,
I believe

I believe the Minority Leaders do not expect the prayer will, nor is it their wish that it should be complied with. Several reasons occur, which induce me to adopt this belief; and I shall give them in my next.

L E T T E R III.

SHOULD the Petitions be so numerous, and come from such a great and respectable part of the nation, as to make it unsafe, or at least impolitic in Ministry to disregard them, and actually set about the Reform therein proposed, the popularity of these Leaders would, in that case, be immediately transferred to the present Ministry. For, though many might impute the Ministerial proceedings to timidity, there would be many ready to acknowledge their candour and moderation, in mowing the grass that was growing under their feet; and, of course, the plan for overturning the present Ministry would be totally defeated. On the other hand, should Ministry reject or disregard the Petitions, all those who have signed them will consider themselves treated with insult and contempt, and, of course, the minds of the Freeholders in the various Counties will be more inflamed with resentment against the present Administration.

Administration than ever: and this spirit, by the seasonable application of fresh matter, from time to time, to keep alive and encrease the resentment, will certainly co-operate with the views of the Minority, at the ensuing General Election.

I hope what has been above advanced, will not be construed to proceed from prejudice. I bear the Gentlemen who compose the Minority no ill-will. Many of them I personally know, and respect for their domestic virtues, as well as elevated station: and as to others, whom I know only as actors on the political stage, I view, unbiaſſed by the prejudices of party, their public conduct. Be persuaded, that in the course of these Letters you will find, that my opinion is not governed by the political creed of any party whatsoever.

You asked my sentiments respecting these Petitions, which I could not fully explain to you, without entering into an examination of the views of those who first set them on foot: in that examination, I have endeavoured
strictly

strictly to adhere to impartiality, truth, and justice. But that their object, aim, and end are what I described in my last Letter, may, I think, be proved almost beyond a doubt, if we advert to their conduct in a very recent matter respecting Ireland. It is well known, for some years past, they have seemed to take the cause of Ireland under their protection, in parliament and elsewhere. They talked loudly of the expediency, and even necessity, of granting that Country some relief; yet always vaguely, without pointing out specifically any one mode which ought to be adopted. Some of them went over to that Kingdom, to make themselves acquainted with the distresses of the Country; I will not say, to foment discontents, and render the inhabitants more uneasy under their miserable situation; though some will not scruple to assert this, how justly I know not. Yet I can assert, from my own knowledge, that the Irish, who came here to solicit redress, looked on the Minority as their Patrons; they had a ready admittance into their houses every day at breakfast, and a hearty invitation to their tables at dinner: in short, the

the Irish looked to that party alone for salvation. At length the Minister proposed a plan of relief for the Irish, equal to their claims, and superior to their expectations. The measure was carried without any debate thereon in either House of Parliament. For when the Minority, the quondam patrons of Ireland, found the Minister had taken up that matter on such ground as would give the Irish ample satisfaction, they retired from the House, silent, abashed, and confounded. As soon as this event reached Ireland, it immediately excited in the breasts of the inhabitants universally, both in their Houses of Parliament and elsewhere, a contempt of the Minority, for the base desertion of their cause, when put to the test; as well as gratitude to the Minister, for his seasonable regard to their interest and welfare. In short, bonfires, illuminations, and other demonstrations of joy and gratitude, in Dublin and other places, were instituted in honour of the Minister; and the Leaders in Opposition were burnt in effigy.

Perhaps

Perhaps if we were to examine into the conduct of the Minority for these last ten or fifteen years, respecting the affairs on the other side the Atlantic, it might strengthen the opinion I have advanced. But they are still pending; and how they will terminate, I can scarcely even form a plausible conjecture: I therefore wish to draw a veil over the melancholy subject, and wait for future events, which time will bring forth, heartily wishing, that the catastrophe of that tragedy may terminate as satisfactorily and happily to both Countries, as the late commotions of Ireland have done. When once the scene is closed, we shall then be better able to form a judgment, whether the people in this Country, or the Americans, owe any thanks to the Minority, for their conduct during this unfortunate contest.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

I AM not inclined to quote trite, old-fashioned scraps of morality, and, perhaps, you are less inclined to attend to them; yet I can scarcely avoid observing, that the late conduct of the Minority corroborates an old maxim, viz. when men in public stations are not actuated by a pure sincerity and integrity of heart, but depend on craft and chicanery to acquire and support an importance, many events, in the course of life, will happen, to lay them open to the world, render them contemptible, and make the mischief they enviously mean to others, to recoil on themselves.

I have other reasons for believing they do not mean further reformation of abuses, nor even of the abuses alluded to in the petitions. Most of the misapplications of the public treasure, arise from a desire either of aggrandizing the power of the Crown, or of

rewarding the Creatures and Dependants of the Court; the power of the Crown devolving on the Minister for the time being, he takes the advantage of his situation, and enriches himself, or his adherents.

I believe it will be admitted, that the acquirement of power or wealth, or both, has commonly been the inducement for men, in all ages, to undertake so fatiguing, so arduous, and, in general, so unthankful a task, as that of conducting the affairs of a kingdom: a task, abstracted from these inducements, less desirable in this Country, than perhaps in any other, on account of the superior constitutional right in the people to call the Minister to account, when they disapprove of his conduct.

I will not, I cannot say, with truth and justice, that there have never been Ministers, in any Country, who have undertaken the conduct of national affairs, merely from an enthusiastic, or disinterested view of rendering themselves useful to mankind. If we credit History, we may reasonably allow, there

there have been such: but most of the characters that have been recorded, will be found, in general, to have existed at those æras of a country, when luxury and dissipation were yet unknown. Doubtless, there are in this, and have been in all ages, men of virtue. But when the minds of the people, of any country, are corrupted, a man of real integrity and ability, knowing that the public business of that country can scarcely be carried on without some degree of art and duplicity, will seldom seek for public employment; he will rather retire from the bustle of ministerial business, and seek for peace and tranquility in a private station. Boetius and Belisarius, however, are instances to the contrary: they were ministers of a stern, inflexible virtue in a court immersed in luxury and abandoned prostitution: but they were both of them at length banished from that court, having too much virtue for the corrupt ages in which they lived. Even the present century has furnished us with an instance; I mean, the wise, the upright, and the sincere Cardinal Fleury; who, though a priest was not proud, though a minister was

not ambitious, and who maintained his popularity and power to his death. By his wisdom and disinterestedness he raised France, from a state of wretchedness, exhausted and reduced by the ambition of Louis the Fourteenth, to a state of opulence never known before; and during the course of upwards of twenty years administration, (great part of which time the late King was in his minority) no one ever accused him of an action sinister or selfish.

Unblemished characters, indeed, we read of with reverence, but without entertaining a hope to find such in our own times. All the virtue we can hope for in a Minister, in so luxurious and dissipated an age as the present, is, that he should be divested of that narrow, mercenary principle of holding his place for the sake of serving himself, and his hungry dependants; and that his object should be to gain popularity and power while living, and to have his memory transmitted down to posterity with applause and honour, for his spirited and successful conduct.

I do

I do not recollect a Minister this Country has produced, in the present century, who answers to this character, except the late Lord Chatham. He had a soul too great to be actuated by mercenary views; and his public conduct was enterprizing, noble, and disinterested. Had he been blessed with the philosophical moderation of Fleury, I would have him classed in a rank superior to Him; but he was a slave to expensive ostentation. When Fleury died, after all his debts and funeral expences were paid, his fortune amounted to ten thousand livres, or *eight* hundred pounds sterling. Lord Chatham died INSOLVENT. But blemishes in his domestic character, are already almost obliterated by the splendour of his public virtues; and, when his private failings shall have been long buried in oblivion, posterity shall read volumes recording the transactions of his ministry, with wonder and admiration. Happy would it be for this country, had we now another Chatham!

Let any one Member, in either House, convince us, that he is actuated as that
lately

lately-deceased, venerable Peer was, by the desire of obtaining the good-will of the people, and transmitting his name down to posterity with honour and fame, he will soon become the God of our idolatry. There is one I could name, but it might be deemed flattery to mention him, whom nature and education have blessed with genius and abilities, not inferior to Lord Cahatham. Sincerely is it to be wished, that he was equally animated with an enthusiastic zeal for the service of his country. His youthful ardour, manly sense, universal knowledge, and creative genius, would, if directed by the principle of public virtue, cause such prompt decisions and vigorous efforts in our councils, as would soon inspire our fleets and armies with confidence. Then would they shew their inherent, bold, intrepid disposition, in every part of the world, where our enemies are to be found, and perform what other nations would deem impracticable:

Pardon this digression; which, though it may not appear to be immediately to the point in question, has yet a near relation
to

to it. I meant to illustrate a position before laid down—That the acquirement and possession of power or wealth, or both, have been, in general, the inducement for men to aspire to the reins of government; though we have had some exceptions to the contrary.

Let us look round to the Leaders of the Minority, who have so long been candidates for ministerial places, and see if we can point out one whom we can suppose, (notwithstanding the abilities of some of them are very distinguished) divested of these inducements, or who has any similitude with those great characters before-mentioned.

I confess myself unequal to the task.

If their natural dispositions and past conduct give us no reason to believe they are disinterested at present, while they are Opposers of Government, can our hopes be better founded on their political principles, when they become Ministers?

They

They call themselves Whigs, and they have branded the present Ministry with the name of Tory, on a supposition that it is a name reproachful and odious to the people.

It is not my inténion, in this Letter, to enter into the merits of the political tenets which those words mean to convey, nor to examine whether they are names properly applied. I will for a moment admit that they are: yet, if the professions of Whiggism are not so sincere, as to curb and restrain the love of power in a Minister, which was not the case in the last age, I think I may venture to assert, that we have as little foundation for hope of disinterestedness from the present Whigs, on account of their political principles, any more than from their natural dispositions.

I will now advert a little to the conduct of the Whigs, when in power; and the last reign will give us ample field for speculation: for this country, near the whole of that period, was governed by Whigs. Sir Robert Walpole's most zealous friends did not, I believe, even mention, among his
other

other good qualities, the virtue of disinterestedness. And as to the Duke of Newcastle, having been on the political stage a year, in the latter part of his administration I can speak from my own knowledge respecting his political principles and conduct: and though, he was divested of the passion of accumulating wealth, and so far from realizing any pecuniary benefits to himself, that he squandered away an immense patrimonial fortune in vain ostentation, and died almost a beggar, yet I may venture to assert, that the abolition of Sine-cure Places and Pensions, the retrenching of the profits of posts under Government, however exorbitant, or, in any way whatever, diminishing the power and influence of the Crown, made no part of his political creed: and I will further assert, that the additional increase of Sine-cure Places and Pensions, the exorbitant profits of efficient Places, and also the expenditure under the head of Secret and Special Service, &c. were as great during his administration, as at any other period of equal duration, from the Revolution to the present time*.

* But this matter may be clearly ascertained by the papers lately laid before the House of Commons.

Any one less acquainted with my political principles than you are, would, upon the perusal of these Letters, naturally conclude me to be a rank Tory, and a zealous advocate for the present administration. But you know, I was educated from my infancy in the strict principles of Whiggism, and to which principles I have stedfastly adhered in every period of my life, but have never attached myself to any party, or set of men, under that or any other political denomination: for I never found any set of men, after they became public, political characters, act consistently with those principles of Whiggism, which I had been taught. No one who performs an active part in the political scene, can be a Whig in practice, unless he be divested of ambition and avarice; and instances of such so rarely occur, that I have long laid it down as a maxim, that speculative Whiggism is one thing, and practical Whiggism another. As to my being an advocate for the present administration, I am no more an advocate for them, than I would be for any other set of men under the like circumstances. This country is furrounded, on all sides, with
danger,

danger, and, therefore, the Ministers for the time being should be free from all *internal* embarrassments as much as possible, that their attention may be employed to ward off the blows meditated against this country by our *foreign* enemies; instead therefore of embarrassing, I think it my duty strenuously to support them, at least, until the generality of the people shall agree, in making choice of another set of Ministers, preferable to the present, which is not likely to be the case at this juncture. But however if there be any set of men, whom the people have more confidence in, although they should not have more intrinsic merit, I shall be one of the first to give my voice for a change. And this conduct and opinion respecting the present administration, I adopt, as being consistent with those principles of Whiggism which were originally taught me,

LETTER V.

LET us admit that the present Leaders of Opposition, from the whole tenor of their conduct, would be as desirous of supporting and upholding the power and influence of the Crown, could they once get possession of it, as any of their Whiggish predecessors; and, that though their attempts, have hitherto proved unsuccessful, they are not, however, altogether deprived of hope, that they may some time or other obtain the prize; then it naturally follows that while that hope remains, it cannot reasonably be supposed, that they seriously wish to strip the garland of its flowers, without which it will not be worth contending for,

I have thus given you my sentiments on the present County Petitions, and the objects of the Leading Men in Opposition, who have been the promoters of them, more fully than I was able to do during our conversation on the subject; and you may depend on these being
my

my real sentiments; for on so important and momentous a subject as this, when an opinion is asked, I should consider it highly criminal to conceal what I apprehend to be the truth. If the reasons I have urged strike you as forcibly as they do me, you will be persuaded, Opposition only mean to make a cat's paw of the well-meaning Country Gentlemen and Yeomanry, by holding out a lure to catch their attention, by rendering the present Ministry odious, and ensuring to themselves the popular voice at the ensuing General Election. You will also be convinced, that the prayer of the Petition, if complied with, will fall very far short of redressing the Grievance so universally complained of throughout the kingdom, viz. *the exorbitant and encreasing power of the Crown*: and you will also agree with me, that neither the present Ministry, nor those who are candidates, will ever seriously endeavour to restrain that growing power, unless impelled by the general voice of the people. When the people, therefore, have just reason to be alarmed at the encrease of this power, and seriously consider it as a dangerous evil, they must seek for remedy from themselves alone.

Were

Were there still remaining in the nation a sufficiency of that public virtue, which heretofore animated our ancestors to unite in one cause divested of the narrow principles of self-interest, to stem the torrent of regal and ministerial power; I will venture to assert, that the legal, constitutional power might easily be found; for it is vested in the people. If this powerful remedy is never exerted or put in force, it is in effect the same as if it did not exist: and if the people of this country are become so indolent, luxurious and mercenary as to barter their liberties for a little temporary unmanly enjoyment, they have no right to complain of the want of virtue in Ministers: let them mend themselves ere they attempt to mend the State, and if they should hereafter become slaves, it will not be the Court influence, but their own Vices that will make them so.

LETTER

L E T T E R VI.

HAVING mentioned, in my last Letter, that I was educated in the strict principles of Whiggism, to which I have always stedfastly adhered, you desire my definition of those principles.

Whether they are the present principles of that party, I will not take upon myself to determine. The first rudiments of political knowledge, I received when a boy, in an obscure part of England, from a plain, old-fashioned country gentleman, who was esteemed, in his neighbourhood, a man of literature, knowledge of the world, and integrity of heart: He told me he was a Whig; and, I then, and ever since, have considered his principles to be true Whiggism.

He reprobated all the Kings of the Stuart Race, because they shewed a disposition to arbitrary power.

Also

Also the Roman Catholic Religion, because it had a tendency to co-operate with the Sovereign in rendering the people slaves.

He abhorred the idea that Ecclesiastics, of any religion, should interfere, *ex officio*, in the Civil Government of the nation; because he thought Civil and Religious matters should be kept totally separate and distinct.

He was an enemy to restraint on the Liberty of Conscience respecting Religion, and, therefore, thought that persons of every sect should enjoy an uninterrupted exercise of their respective modes of worship; until it appeared any of them had a tendency to disturb the laws and constitution of the kingdom.

He considered the expulsion of the Stuart family, and the institution of the Bill of Rights, which soon after ensued, to be the basis on which the liberties of the people of this country were established and secured.

He considered the present Family on the Throne, as being brought here merely
to

to guarantee and preserve those Liberties; and if, at any future period of time, any King, of the present family, or of any other family, should shew an inclination to extend the power of the Crown beyond the true intent, meaning, and spirit of the Bill of Rights, he should be regarded with jealousy; and if, by an overt act, he attempted to gratify that inclination, he ought to be treated like a Stuart.

He said, that Toryism and Republicanism arose from the prejudices of education, situation, or disposition; and many men of honest intentions had imbibed those principles, on account of those circumstances. But Whiggism was founded on the solid basis of justice, moderation, and good sense.

He thought, that an Aristocracy or a Democracy were more to be dreaded than even absolute Monarchy.

These, said he, are the principles of a true Whig: but, as it is written in an old book, long since laid aside—Beware of false
F
prophets;

prophets; so I say to you, beware of false Whigs. There will be hypocrites, though perhaps under different forms, in all ages. When religion was the criterion by which men judged of the merit of others, designing men assumed the mask of piety, and zeal for religion. If at any time, an attachment and zeal for the liberty, laws, and constitution of the Country, should be esteemed the highest degree of merit, crafty and ambitious men will assume the mask of Patriotism; but the following Characters, altho' they may assume the name of Whigs, can never be justly esteemed such.

I. He that does not scruple to sacrifice the wealth, interest, peace and tranquility of the nation, in order to gratify his own private views.

II. Every Englishman, who shall at any time be instrumental in fomenting discontents at home, or in any appendage to the British Government, when it does not appear that the legislature, or the Crown, have attacked the constitutional rights of any part or member

member of the community. Such an one is not only an apostate from Whiggism, but a traitor to the constitution.

III. Any man, or set of men, openly, and avowedly giving countenance to rebellion, insurrection, riot, or sedition, while no branch of the legislature oversteps the bounds of the constitution, whatever political principles they may possess, are enemies to their country; and the executive power betrays the trust reposed therein, if such are suffered to proceed with impunity,

In short, he told me, that the real Whig possessed the medium, or moderating principle, between the abettors of absolute monarchy, of republicanism, and aristocratic power.

Virtus est medium vitiorum et utrinque reductum.

In some future Letters, I may probably set forth the nature and extent of the power of the Crown, and how far in my opinion it is,

or may become, dangerous to the liberties of the people. I may also point out what appears to me to be the only legal and constitutional means of reducing its influence, and stopping its growth in future.

But, however, when I consider the present disposition of this Country, I little expect to see these means put in execution. It requires unanimity, coolness, steadiness, and resolution, qualities scarcely to be hoped for, from so multitudinous, and mercenary a people as now inhabit this island. Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall not be disappointed: and therefore, like the rest of my countrymen, I'll sink into indolent quiet for the present: and so 'till I feel myself disposed to take up the pen again, I heartily bid you farewell.

P. S. Since writing the above, I have been informed, that the Ministry have in contemplation, to meet the Petitioners half way, and lay a heavy tax on all Places and Pensions, to be continued during the war, or as long afterwards as Parliament shall from

from year to year think proper. A tax which is not to be the guarantee of interest for money borrowed; but to be appropriated, as the Malt and Land tax are, for defraying the expences of the current year. But I have not been able to learn, whether the proportion of the tax is yet fixed on.

I should apprehend the following proposal would bring in a considerable sum annually, and in a great measure correspond with the prayer of the Petition, viz. All efficient Places

From 300l. to 500l. a year, } 10 per. Cent.
to be taxed

From 500l. to 1000l. a year 15 per. Cent.

From 1000l. to 3000l. a year 20 per. Cent.

And all that exceed 3000l. } 25 per. Cent.
a year

Sine-cure Places, and Pensions, should be taxed double to the efficient Places, in the same proportions.

Those persons who possess more than one Place, or Pension, to be taxed at the rate of the amount of all their Places, or Pensions, in the same manner, as if the whole together arose from a single Place, or Pension.

F I N I S.

from year to year think proper. A tax which
is not the guarantee of interest for
any loan; but to be appropriated as
the State and Land tax are, for defraying the
expenses of the current year. But I have not
been able to learn, whether the proposition of
making a loan is on

I should also read the following proposal
should bring in a loan of £100,000 annually,
and in a great measure to be paid with the
proceeds of the British India Company's

to be paid to the
to be paid to the
to be paid to the
to be paid to the
to be paid to the

Since the House, and Parliament, should be
taxed double in the different places, in the
same proportion.

That the House, and Parliament, should be
taxed double in the different places, in the
same proportion.

